

Aldermaston Cricket Club in 2017

After a promising start, the 2017 season became a frustrating series of occasional wash-outs and frequent cancellations. In the first two months of the season we had just one match cancelled. From the start of July until the end of the season, we played just five out of twelve scheduled games, and by the end of the season we had played just twelve matches (plus the Wasing XI game), the fewest number for many seasons.

In 2016 we struggled at times to field a full team of eleven players, yet results were still pretty good. In 2017 we were again short of players for several games, and although we had a good run for the first four games of the season, we won just once in the remaining eight games.

In between the cancellations there were some good games, and some good cricket, with a well-earned opening match win against Bradfield, a good bowling and fielding performance to see off Theale and Tilehurst, a good win against Cheiveley with only nine players, and a huge win at Mortimer, who were a little under-strength in being bowled out for 44. Englefield then inflicted the same kind of defeat as we handed out to Mortimer, and from the middle of June we didn't win again until late August at Sonning, although we did come close at Whitchurch On Thames, when defending only 109. At the end of a slightly frenetic run chase, the home side won by just 2 wickets. The closeness of the result was partly due to the hard work of the target made by the home side and part by our good bowling and fielding – we did well to make such a close game of it.

The match at Sonning was our first away game against them, and produced our first individual hundred for a couple of years with Josh Howell making 110, his first hundred and easily his highest score for the club. He shared a stand of 123 with Garry Masters (70 in 67 balls) for the second wicket, and we posted an imposing 228 for 3 in 35 overs, under darkening skies. The rain started to fall soon after we walked out to field and was still falling steadily at the drinks break the Sonning captain said that if we chose to come off they would be quite happy to declare us winners under the Duckworth Lewis rule, but as it wasn't getting any worse we carried on for a while longer before eventually the rain did get too heavy to continue. With the offer of a Duckworth Lewis win still standing, I put the match details into two online DLM calculators when I got home and found that we were winners by either 75 or 73 runs, depending on which one you believe.

We then finished the season with two more losses, the last day defeat at Bradfield was the first time we'd lost to them for a couple of years, but the match did include our second individual hundred of the season by Charlie Sinton, whose 130 came off 99 balls (probably). However, our slightly depleted bowling resources (and 111 from Ben Hardy) decided the game in the home side's favor.

Statistically, things were a bit skewed this season, with only nine players playing six or more matches, eighteen playing in five or less. Garry Masters finished top of the batting with 311 runs in 11 matches, averaging fractionally (34.56) more than Mark Whitelock (275 runs at 34.38). Mark Whitelock hit the most sixes (11), and took the most wickets (18), and had the best bowling average of the 'regular' players, although. Paul Downham, who took 8 wickets in 3 matches (including the only four-wicket haul of the season at Mortimer) had the best average overall. Kieran Maylen took the most outfield catches (6), and there were 9 wicket-keeping dismissals in the 12 games, 8 catches, shared equally between Rod Howell and Craig Woodley, and one stumping (by Craig Woodley at Bradfield). There were some impressive partnerships stats this year, with second wicket stands piling up 586 runs, including a best partnership of 165 between Charlie Sinton and Garry Masters at Bradfield and 123 between Josh Howell and Garry at Sonning.